

Case Study:
Streamlining immigration
workflows for short term
business travel to europe



Making arrangements for UK employees to work in Europe on short term assignments or business trips hasn't been made any easier by Brexit. Frequent travellers need access to speedy advice whilst HR/legal/compliance need visibility and a record of their employees' travels and time spent in different countries. This is not easy to manage.

The Client

Our client is a multinational business with a significant UK workforce, many of whom frequently travel to Europe on business. The client asked if we could provide a service via our ONE international counsel model, which frequent travelling employees could use directly to request visa application support and immigration advice for the jurisdiction they would be travelling to. This request from HR was in direct response to the increased demand for this type of support following Brexit and the new immigration requirements in EU countries.

The Solution

Our solution was to create a two part tool for business travellers. First, a flow chart to help them identify the answer to their travel/immigration question or to signpost them to the second part of the tool – an online EU visa portal. The portal allows employees to upload immigration queries relating to their trip to Europe and to submit their visa application information to us directly. The intention of the portal was to free up HR time in managing such queries, whilst ensuring that HR maintains oversight over the queries being sent and the movements of their staff.

The success of the portal and its associated process relies on it being able to satisfy three key functions: (1) information gathering; (2) straightforward navigation of the portal by employees; and (3) ensuring that employee use of the portal is appropriate, to ensure that there is only legal spend where necessary.

Information gathering: Entry to the portal is via a link to a questionnaire. The questionnaire has three purposes: (1) to obtain information necessary to answer the travel question and, if appropriate, to apply for a visa in an efficient and secure manner; (2) to obtain the information necessary to complete an A1 form if necessary (see more detail on this piece below) and (3) to ensure that any legal spend is billed to the appropriate cost centre.

Straightforward navigation: We worked with the client to build the supporting structure of the portal, including guides and training for employees to use the portal most efficiently. We added some FAQs for extra clarity, and again to save HR and us time in responding to similar questions on numerous occasions.

Appropriate use: To ensure that the portal is not used frivolously, we built a layer of approvals for certain workflows, which also provides additional data and insight for the client on the portal's use.

Collaboration

Our client liked the concept of the portal so much that they asked whether it would be possible for their tax advisors to also have appropriate access to the portal. The client wanted to expand the capabilities of the portal to allow employees to request A1 Certificate support from the tax advisors, given that much of the same information is required for A1 Certificates as for visa applications. We collaborated with the tax advisors to add new questions to the questionnaire, so that the portal could be used for both purposes and trained the tax advisors on how to use the portal. The two processes could be streamlined as a result, and we could provide the maximum value of the portal offering to the client.

The Result

The portal helps employees request visa applications and immigration legal advice quickly and directly, whilst retaining oversight for line management/HR/legal and finance. HR avoids becoming a bottleneck. We are the one point of contact, regardless of the employee's destination country and are able to provide immigration advice efficiently and seamlessly regardless of jurisdiction. We monitor and update the progress status for each portal entry, manage local counsel spend and attribute use of the portal to the client's relevant cost centre for billing. Our portal has streamlined the EU visa and A1 Certificate application processes, eliminating the previous duplication between service providers and avoiding the need to ask busy employees for the same information multiple times.

It starts with MDR ONE

ONE is our integrated international counsel model, providing global employment, HR and labour law support wherever you need it.

Drawing on the in-depth local knowledge and expertise of leading lawyers from around the world, we provide you with intelligent, scalable and consistent global legal support – all coordinated by us as one integrated service.

We are always your one primary advisor and one point of contact wherever you need support in the world. All managed seamlessly from start to finish, within your budgets and timescales.

To discuss how MDR ONE can deliver greater efficiency and invaluable insights for your legal function, please get in touch.



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